

DS-252

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT	
Project Name: Overhead Power Line	Proposed Implementation Date: Spring 2014
Proponent: Sheridan Electric Cooperative Incorporated, P O Box 227, Medicine Lake, Montana 59247	
<p>Type and Purpose of Action: Sheridan Electric Cooperative Incorporated has submitted an Application for Right of Way for Utilities Over, Under, Along or Across State Lands forms to the Glasgow Unit Office. The purpose of this project is to place a one pole overhead power line on one tract of State of Montana lands. The total length of the power line will be 71.71 feet in length crossing State land, encompassing .42 acres. Project Explanation: this project consists of 50 miles of transmission and distribution line under-build between North Dakota and Montana. The project covers private land and State land. Construction will be completed using Grade B Transmission construction practices. The timeline for construction is from September 2013 through July 2014. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality was informed of the project and was sent a hard copy package of the project materials. The DEQ verified the materials and the project achieve the requirements of 75-20-104(S) (iii) MCA which exempted the project from the requirements of the MFSA.</p>	
Location: SE4SE4SE4, Section 36 Township 32 North Range 58 East	County: Sheridan

I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT	
1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.	Sheridan Electric Cooperative Incorporated has completed the Application for Right of Way Easement for Utilities Over, Under or Across State Lands. The Right of Way Easement Applications were submitted to the Glasgow Unit Office. The purpose of the Right of Way Applications is to place one pole of an overhead electric transmission line on State land.
2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:	Montana Department of Environmental Quality, Helena Office, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Glasgow Unit Office, Real Estate Management Bureau, Helena Office. There may be other county or state agencies that may have jurisdiction or permits for this type of project
3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:	Action Alternative: Grant a Right of

	<p>Way Easement to Sheridan Electric Cooperative Incorporated to place a one pole overhead electric transmission line on State land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Deny a Right of Way Easement to Sheridan Electric Cooperative Incorporated to place a one pole overhead transmission line on State land.</p>
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II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS
<p>4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are fragile, compactible or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?</p>	<p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the soils under this type of alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: This type of project will impact the soils on the power line route. The impacts are minimal and the area of impact will continue to produce dryland agricultural crops on the state land. Depending on the time of year installation there may be no impacts to the dryland agriculture crops. The soil types for the State lands involved are sandy loams.</p>
<p>5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION: Are important surface or groundwater resources present? Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality?</p>	<p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to water quality, quantity and distribution.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the water quality, quantity and distribution of surface water on the State land. There are no identified prairie pothole areas or other surface water resources on this tract of State land.</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
6. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?	<p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the air quality under this type of alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project will have no impacts on the air quality of the land involved with the project.</p>
7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?	<p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the dryland agriculture crops under this alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The area of impact will continue to produce small grain or dryland alfalfa crops after project completion. The impacts are minimal to surface vegetation by heavy equipment to install the power pole.</p>
8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?	<p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to terrestrial, avian and aquatic life and habitats under this alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: This type of activity will not disturb the habitat types on the State land. The area of impact is small in scope and there will be no impacts to the wildlife and upland bird habitat resources associated with this tract of State land involved with this project.</p>
9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Sensitive Species or Species of special concern?	<p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources under this alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project area contains no known unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources. There are no prairie pothole areas or wetlands on this tract of state land.</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	<p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the historical or archeological sites under this alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The State land was inspected by R. Hoyt Richards, former Unit Manager of the Glasgow Unit Office. Mr. Richards found historic, archaeological or paleontological resources present at the time of inspection. The majority of the State land surface has been disturbed for dryland agriculture crops.</p>
11. AESTHETICS: Is the project on a prominent topographic feature? Will it be visible from populated or scenic areas? Will there be excessive noise or light?	<p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to aesthetic values under this alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project site is not located near county roads. The project will not be visible to the general public. The project will have no impacts to the aesthetic values associated with the State land involved with this project.</p>
12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY: Will the project use resources that are limited in the area? Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?	<p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the environmental resources of land, water air or energy under this alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project will place no demands on environmental resources of land, water, air or energy.</p>
13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?	<p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to studies, plans or projects under this alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The overhead power transmission line installation will not impact other projects or plans that may be occurring on the State</p>

## II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

land.

## III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	<p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to human health and safety under this alternative.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: The installation of an overhead power line has various human health and safety risks. The employer and employee identify the health and safety risks as occupational hazards.</p>
15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	<p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to industrial, commercial and agriculture activities under this alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The overhead power line will add to existing electrical resources associated with this area. The project will add to the dryland agriculture and livestock grazing activities that surround the installation of a power line in this area. The power line will add reliable electricity to rural farmstead home sites and local small town communities.</p>
16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	<p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to quantity and distribution of employment under this alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the quantity and distribution of employment. The project may employ some local work</p>

	force, depending on the activities surrounding the power line installation.
17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	<p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to local and state tax base under this alternative.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: The project may or may not have some positive impacts on the local or state tax base. The writer of this document is not aware of what type of tax base may be impacted by this project type.</p>
18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed?	<p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts for demand for government services under this alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project will place no demands for government services. The construction of the power line will not create substantial traffic on existing county roads.</p>
19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	<p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the locally adopted environmental plans and goals under this alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact locally adopted environmental plans and goals. Impacts to other lands that are private or Federal lands is covered by their rules and regulations.</p>
20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES: Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is there recreational potential within the tract?	<p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to recreational values under this alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the recreational values associated with the state land. There are no wilderness areas located near the projects site.</p>
21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF	No Action Alternative: There would be

POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?	<p>no impacts to density and distribution of population and housing.</p> <p>Action Alternative. The project will not impact the density and distribution of the population and housing on this rural area.</p>
22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	<p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to social structures and mores under this alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the social structures of the local communities.</p>
23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	<p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to cultural uniqueness and diversity under this alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the cultural uniqueness and diversity of the land. The State land tracts contain no uniqueness that is not found in other environmental areas on or near this State land tract.</p>
24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:	<p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to social and economic circumstances under this alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative. The project provides some economic benefit to the local community businesses that supply products to the company that will be installing the overhead power line.</p>

EA Checklist Prepared By: s/Randy Dirkson\s  
Randy Dirkson, Land Use Specialist

Date: March 18, 2014

IV. FINDING	
25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:	Action Alternative
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:	No significant impacts are anticipated.
27. Need for Further Environmental Analysis:  <div> <input type="checkbox"/> EIS           <input type="checkbox"/> More Detailed EA           <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Further Analysis         </div>	

EA Checklist Approved By:	<u>Matthew Poole</u>	<u>Glasgow Unit Manager</u>
	Name	Title
	<u>s/Matthew Poole\s</u>	Date: <u>March 18, 2014</u>
	Signature	



